Parliament neither accorded fire safety much priority, nor mentioned about enforcement measures to effectively control carrying by passengers of articles like crackers, LPG cylinders and inflammable material, thereby contributing towards accidents like Fire in Frontier Mail on 15th May; and

(b) how Railways proposes to eliminate such criminal negligence endangering lives of passengers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) and (b) With the safety measures taken by Indian Railways to prevent and control the cases of fire in trains, the number of fire accidents have come down from 405 during 1960-61 to 16 during 2002-03. The steps taken by Indian Railways in this regard as also the efforts being made have been brought out in the 'White Paper on Safety'. In addition, safety drives are launched from time to time involving Officers, supervisors, Railway Protection Force and also civil authorities to prevent carriage of inflammables including sigris, crackers, kerosene oil, gas cylinders etc. by passengers. Defaulters are posecuted under the Railways Act, 1989.

Baggage checks by RPF at Railway Stations

2190. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are many passengers that carry inflammable materials with them concealed in their baggage;

(b) if so, whether RPF is entitled to conduct surprise baggage checks at all major railway stations;

(c) if so, the number of checks conducted by RPF at Delhi stations in the last one year and the details of questionable/objectionable item confiscated by the RPF during these surprise checks; and

(d) how many cases were booked after such checks for questionable/ objectionable items?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) Yes, Sir. Some passengers do

carry inflammable materials with them alongwith or concealed in their baggage.

(b) to (d) "Policing" being a subject-matter of the State Government, security of passengers in the running trains and Railway premises is the constitutional responsibility of the State Government concerned. The cases of crime on Railways are reported to, registered and investigated by the Government Railway Police (GRP). The Railway administration and RPF assist the Government Railway Police for better security of passengers. Where offences under section 164 of the Railway Act (unlawfully bring dangerous goods on a Railway) are noticed, the offenders are apprehended and produced before the Magistrates or handed over to the GRP for necessary action. RPF independently does not conduct luggage checks at Railway Stations.

Development of coaches by RITES

2191. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRI GIREDDY:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Rail India Technical and Economic Services Limited has been given permission to carry out study and develop crash worthy coaches for the Indian Railway;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any time-frame has been given within which it should complete its study and submit its report for construction of coaches; and

(d) by when, the Indian Railways would introduce air brake system in all coaches, wagons and locomotives?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The contract is to analyse the present design of coaches by Finite Element method and then to develop a crashworthy design for General Second Class and the Second-cum Luggage & Guard coaches. These designs will be tested through crash simulation on computers.